

GLOSSARY OF SECURITY ENDORSEMENTS

by Brian Birch

In the February 1980 issue of "BNA Perforator", Jon Johnson published his "Glossary of Perfin Terminology" (Reference 1). Three months later (Reference 2), he reported that there had been very few comments received about his Glossary. I had intended at this time to send some comments of my own and even managed to compile a few notes. However, my good intentions finally succumbed to lack of time although I have continued to collect data and compile notes sporadically, ever since.

Jon persevered with his Glossary and it was published in U.S.A. in 1985 (Reference 3) and the U.K. in 1986 (Reference 4). Now that the Glossary has appeared in the U.K., I am obliged to respond, the problem with the Perfin Glossary is that it is very incomplete and omits much of the basic terminology. It also includes many descriptions rather than definitions and fails to pay due regard to its parentage i.e. Perfins are only one facet of Security Endorsements which are encompassed by Philately as a whole. In other words, any definition must not only be true to all other perfins-related definitions but must relate in turn to Security Endorsement and Philatelic definitions.

To illustrate this relationship, consider the term **PERFIN**:

A perfin is a security endorsement on a stamp. It is not the stamp itself. Yet the Glossary defines a perfin as "A stamp....."

Similarly, a perfin is produced by a perforating machine as are the small holes used to separate one stamp from another. There is a great difference in the scale of the machines but the basic parts are the same and must therefore share common definitions. It is therefore not appropriate to include in the definition of a perforating machine "hand cranked or electrically operated" since any motive power can be used. In fact the motive power used does not affect the function of a machine, only its performance and should not even be mentioned in a definition.

The Glossary that follows is my own although it owes much to the writings of others (particularly Reference 5). Those terms in the Perfin Glossary which I felt it right to omit are listed separately, each accompanied by my reasoning. (See Appendix.)

REFERENCES

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Introduction to the Glossary of Security Endorsements.

This is a preliminary effort only. There are bound to be errors and omissions which should be notified to me so that a revised version may be produced.

The Glossary must be considered as a whole rather than a collection of unrelated definitions. For example, the definition of "Perfin" when taken alone may seem a little eccentric but when looked at in conjunction with all the other Security Endorsements can be seen to be part of a pattern. It was not the intention to provide an encyclopaedic entry for each term, rather a concise definition with additional notes for clarification if necessary.

Terms included in the Glossary have been compiled on a historical basis in that I have attempted to include all terms specific to Security Endorsements that have been used during the evolution of the literature on the subject. Many cross-references have therefore been included. Acceptable alternative words are listed as Synonyms in the main entry whilst those terms which are obsolete (e.g. SPIF) or improperly used (e.g. Blind pin) are listed as Undesirable Synonyms.

All definitions relate to stamps for the sake of simplicity although it is acknowledged that perfins, for example, are also applied to postal stationery, revenues and more recently locals, seals and other primarily philatelic items.

Finally, the verb "to perfin" has been used rather than "to perforate", although the latter is obviously the correct form. This has been done to avoid ambiguity; for example "a stamp which has been perforated" would not be taken to have the same meaning as "a stamp which has been Perfinned".

Terms used in the definitions which are themselves defined elsewhere in the Glossary are given in capitals.

GLOSSARY OF SECURITY ENDORSEMENTS.

ADDRESS PERFIN:

A PERFIN which includes an indication of the users address.

ADVERTISING RING:

A form of SECURITY ENDORSEMENT in which the identifying mark is printed around the stamped impression on postal stationery.

| Although approved by the British Post Office for use as a security measure, printed rings on postal stationery were eagerly adopted as a form of advertising, particularly by stamp dealers.

AFFIXER:

See: STAMP AFFIXING MACHINE.

Continued/

AFFIXER PERFIN:

A PERFIN produced by or used in a STAMP AFFIXING MACHINE.

Such perfins can usually be identified by the special style of lettering or design used (e.g. Schermack, Poko, etc.) or by the perforations along one side of the stamp being trimmed by the inaccurate setting of the Guillotine blade that cut the sheets of stamps into strips to manufacture the coils used in the machines.

AUTOMATIC STAMPING MACHINE:

See: STAMP AFFIXING MACHINE.

BACK-PRINT:

See: UNDERPRINT.

BED PLATE:

See: DIE PLATE.

BLIND HOLE:

See: BLIND PERFORATION.

BLIND PERFIN:

A PERFIN in which all of the holes are BLIND PERFORATIONS.

BLIND PERFORATION:

The space on a stamp where a PERFORATION should have been produced.

A blind perforation is caused by the failure of the perforating machine to produce a clean-cut hole. The blind perforation can therefore be partially cut or merely an indentation in the stamp if the pin has failed to penetrate the paper. Alternatively, if a pin in the perforating machine is broken, the presence of a blind perforation may only be deduced by the absence of a hole in a known pattern.

Synonym : BLIND HOLE.

: MISSING HOLE.

Undesirable synonym: BLIND PIN.

BLIND PIN:

Use: BLIND PERFORATION.

BRANCH CODE HOLE:

One or more extra PERFORATIONS, not forming part of the basic PATTERN, deliberately included to distinguish between otherwise identical PATTERNS used by different branches of the same organisation.

Synonym: CODE HOLE.

Undesirable synonym: OFFSET PERIOD.

See also: VARIETY.

BRANDED STAMP:

Use: PERFIN.

Continued/

CAIN RATING:

A system used for ascribing a RARITY FACTOR to United States PERFINS.

In this system, which was named after its originator, each perfins is allocated one of the letters A to F: A indicating the rarest perfins and F the most common.

CARPET DIE:

A PATTERN which is intended to run across two or more stamps.

Stamps that bear one or two letters from a carpet die are often mistaken for individual perfins in their own right.

Undesirable synonym: SE-TENANT PERFINs.

CODE HOLE:

See: BRANCH CODE HOLE.

COIL STAMP AFFIXING MACHINE:

Use: STAMP AFFIXING MACHINE.

COMMEMORATIVE PERFIN:

A PERFIN used to commemorate a specific event (usually a philatelic exhibition).

Commemorative perfins differ from "true" perfins in that they are generally prepared for sale as souvenirs of an event rather than for security purposes. Also, they are usually withdrawn once the event commemorated is over.

DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIAL PERFIN:

See: OFFICIAL PERFIN.

DESIGN PERFIN:

A PATTERN containing neither letters nor numbers.

See also: FANCY PERFIN.

DIE:

A set of PINS and corresponding holes in the PERFORATING HEAD that produces an individual PATTERN.

If it is possible to differentiate between sub-types of a pattern produced by a multi-die perforating machine, then these are termed DIE 1, DIE 2, etc.

DIE PLATE:

That part of a PERFORATING MACHINE in which the holes are bored and into which the free ends of the PINS descend in order to effect the perforation.

Synonym: BED PLATE.

: PERFORATING PLATE

DIE PLATING:

The reconstructing of the DIE positions in a MULTI-DIE PERFORATING MACHINE by distinguishing the minor differences in the positions of the PINS.

Synonym: PLATING.

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Glossary of Security Perfins (Part 2)

DOUBLE PERFIN:

A PERFIN that has been applied twice to the same stamp.

The two (or more) perfins which sometimes occur on large stamps when perfinned by a multi-die perforating machine in which the dies have been spaced for normal definitive sized stamps, are not termed a double perfins.

DUMB PERFIN:

A PERFIN that contains no letters in the design.

EMBOSSED ENDORSEMENT:

A form of SECURITY ENDORSEMENT in which the identifying mark is produced in the stamp by embossing.

FANCY PERFIN:

A DESIGN PERFIN which is decorative or elaborate.

Monogram and numeral perfins however ornate are not usually termed fancy perfins although the line can be very fine at times and the choice is a personal one.

FAVOUR PERFIN:

A PERFIN produced on demand for a person other than the normal user.

Generally, such perfins are produced on behalf of perfins collectors who require a copy for their collection.

FEDERAL OFFICIAL:

See : OFFICIAL PERFIN.

FEEDER PLATE:

The steel plate attached to the base of the PERFORATING MACHINE upon which the sheets of stamps are laid as they are fed into the machine.

FILM PROCESSING PERFORATIONS:

A series of numbers perforated through both the end of an exposed film roll received for developing and the customer's return address label in order to maintain the film owner's identity.

Since the customer's return address is on the reverse of the label bearing the film processing company's address, the stamps used to send the film for processing often bear part or all of the identification number. Once the stamps have been soaked off the address label, the perforations through the stamps can sometimes be mistaken for perfins. Kodak is the only company known to use this system of identification.

See also : PSEUDO-PERFIN.

Synonym : KODAK FILM PROCESSING PERFIN.

FULL NAME PERFIN :

A PERFIN which incorporates a complete name.

This term is often widened in scope to include perfins incorporating any complete word. Names and words, that are formed by the accidental juxtaposition of initials are excluded.

Continued/

HEAD :

See : PERFORATING HEAD.

IDENTITY:

The name of the user of a particular SECURITY ENDORSEMENT.

ILLEGAL PERFIN :

A PERFIN that contravenes the postal regulations of the country upon whose stamps it is found.

ISSUE COLLECTION:

A collection of PERFINs which aims to include every different PATTERN found on a specific stamp issue.

Compare with : PATTERN COLLECTION.

: POSITION COLLECTION.

Undesirable synonym: SYNOPTIC COLLECTION.

KODAK FILM PROCESSING PERFIN:

See : FILM PROCESSING PERFORATIONS.

MANUSCRIPT ENDORSEMENT:

A form of SECURITY ENDORSEMENT in which the identifying mark is produced on the stamp by handwriting.

The word "Paid" commonly found tying the stamp to the envelope on early Indian (and other countries) covers is an example of this type of security endorsement. It was intended to prevent native servants entrusted with conveying letters to the Post Office from removing the stamps for resale and destroying the letters.

MINT PERFIN:

A mint stamp bearing a PERFIN.

Perfins are essentially security devices indicating the owner's identity so mint perfins are not often encountered (except for favour perfins and philatelic perfins). They are however not highly prized and do not normally carry any premium in value over used perfins.

MIRROR PAIR :

A pair of stamps which were folded together and then perfinned.

When the pair is opened, each stamp carries the same perfin but reversed with respect to the other i.e. as if seen in a mirror.

MISSING HOLE :

See : BLIND PERFORATION.

MONOGRAM PERFIN:

A PERFIN in which the letters are in the form of a monogram.

See also: FANCY PERFIN.

MULTI-DIE PERFORATING MACHINE:

A PERFORATING MACHINE in which the PERFORATING HEAD carries two or more dies.

Undesirable synonym: MULTI-HEAD PERFORATING MACHINE.

Continued/

MULTI-HEAD PERFORATING MACHINE:

Use: MULTI-DIE PERFORATING MACHINE.

MULTIPERFIN:

A PERFIN produced by a MULTI-DIE PERFORATING MACHINE in which the DIES are so similar that they are not given different DIE numbers.

This term was coined by V. Maxa in 1982 (Perfinist, Dec. 11982. (7). 3).

MULTIPLE PERFIN:

A PERFIN that has been applied two or more times to the same stamp.

See also: DOUBLE PERFIN.

MULTIPOSITION DOUBLE PERFIN:

A DOUBLE PERFIN in which the two PERFINs have been applied in different POSITIONS.

NUMERAL PERFIN:

A PATTERN consisting only of numbers and containing neither designs nor letters.

The scope of numeral perfins is sometimes extended to cover all PATTERNS containing numbers even if they do include letters or designs.

OFFICIAL:

A PERFIN used by a Government department or agency.

Those collectors in countries with Federal, Provincial or State Governments tend to differentiate between these classes of official perfins. Certain collectors also differentiate between officials intended for general use by Government departments and agencies and departmental officials whose use is restricted to a single department or agency.

Undesirable synonym: PUNCTURED OFFICIAL.

OFFSET PERIOD:

Use : BRANCH CODE HOLE.

OVERPRINT:

A form of SECURITY ENDORSEMENT in which the identifying mark is produced on the face of the stamp by printing.

Although the term overprint is in general use for this form of security endorsement, the strictly correct term should be "overprinted endorsement" to distinguish it from any other form of overprinting. The stamps are usually overprinted using conventional printing presses, however, rubber stamps and typewriters have been used for this purpose.

PARTIAL PERFIN:

An incomplete PATTERN on a stamp, the remainder of the PATTERN being on the adjoining stamp.

Partial perfins are caused by stamps being misplaced in the perforating machine such that the perfin produced falls on two or more stamps.

Compare with : SPLIT PERFIN.

Continued/

Glossary of Security Perfins (Part 2).

PATTERN:

The PERFIN produced by an individual PERFORATING HEAD.

A multi-die perforating machine produces only one pattern even though minor differences in the pin positions may be distinguished. (See : DIE).

Synonym1 TYPE.

PATTERN COLLECTION!

A collection of PERFINS which alas to Include one copy of each PATTERN irrespective of the stamp on which it is found.

Compare with : ISSUE COLLECTION.

: POSITION COLLECTION.

Synonym: TYPE COLLECTION.

PERFIN:

A form of SECURITY ENDORSEMENT in which the identifying mark is produced in the stamp by perforating.

The term perfin is derived from the words perforated initials (or possibly perforated insignia). Strictly speaking, perfin is a security endorsement perforated through a stamp. Generally however, any stamp bearing a perfin is itself called a perfin.

Undesirable synonym : BRANDED STAMP.

: PERFORATED CONTROL MARKING

: PUNCH.

: PUNCH PERFORATED.

: PUNCHIE.

: PUNST.

: SPIFS.

PERFORATED CANCELLATION:

The defacement of a stamp, produced by means of perforation, intended to prevent its re-use.

Perforated cancellations are most frequently encountered on revenue stamps due to their generally being of higher value than postage stamps. Once such stamps are removed from the document, the perforated cancellation can sometimes be mistaken for a perfin.

See also : PERFORATED PRECANCEL.

: PSEUDOPERFIN.

PERFORATED CONTROL MARKING :

Use : PERFIN.

PERFORATED INITIALS :

See : PERFIN.

Continued/

PERFORATED PRECANCEL:

A cancellation applied to stamps in bulk by perforation prior to their being individually affixed to newspapers, etc.

Since the newspaper is not perforated by the cancellation, it is very easy to mistake the perforated cancellation for a perfin even when the stamp is on piece. Perforated precancels are only known from Argentina.

See also: PERFORATED CANCELLATION.
: PSEUDOPERFIN.

PERFORATING HEAD:

That unit of a PERFORATING MACHINE that effects the perforation.

The perforating head comprises the pin plate, pins, stripping plate and die plate. A perforating machine has only one head irrespective of the number of dies it may contain.

Synonym: HEAD.

PERFORATING MACHINE:

A machine which produces a pattern of small holes in stamps by punching out tiny circles of paper.

The perforations are generally intended to facilitate separation of the stamps, act as a perfin or a perforated cancellation.

Synonym: PERFORATOR.

PERFORATING PLATE:

See: DIE PLATE.

PERFORATION:

A small hole intentionally produced in a stamp by means of a PERFORATING MACHINE.

Perforations are normally circular but can be any other shape.

Compare with PUNCH (2.).

PERFORATOR:

See: PERFORATING MACHINE.

PERSONAL PERFIN:

A PERFIN used by a private individual rather than an organisation.

In general, personal perfins are used for philatelic interest rather than for security purposes.

PHILATELIC EXHIBITION PERFIN:

See: COMMEMORATIVE PERFIN.

PHILATELIC PERFIN:

A PERFIN used for philatelic purposes rather than for security.

Soc also : COMMEMORATIVE PERFIN.
: PERSONAL PERFIN.
: PHILATELIC SOCIETY PERFIN.

(To be continued in the next Edition.)

PHILATELIC SOCIETY PERFIN:

A PERFIN used by a philatelic society.

Philatelic societies tend to use perfins for publicity purposes rather than for security.

PIN:

A flat-ended steel needle used as a punch for perforating paper.

The pin must be associated with a hole in the die plate. Perforation is effected by the cutting action between the edges of the pin and the hole as the pin enters the hole, producing a tiny round paper disc.

PIN PLATE:

That part of a PERFORATING MACHINE in which are fixed the pins which mate with the holes in the DIE PLATE and produce the PERFORATIONS.

PLATING:

See: DIE PLATING.

POKO:

See: AFFIXER PERFIN.

POSITION:

The geometric relationship of the PERFIN to the face of the stamp.

Eight different positions are possible and various schemes have been used to describe them.

POSITION COLLECTION:

A collection of PERFINS which aims to include as many as possible of the eight different positions in which a PERFIN can occur on each stamp.

Compare with : ISSUE COLLECTION.

: PATTERN COLLECTION.

POSITION PAIR:

A pair of stamps each of which has been perfinned but with the PERFINS in different positions.

Mirror pairs are not position pairs as both of the stamps were perfinned in the same operation.

PRIVATE PERFIN:

A PERFIN used by a body other than a Government Department or Agency.

The only use of this term is to differentiate between official perfins and all other perfin (the term non-official having other connotations).

Undesirable synonyms PRIVATE PERFORATED IDENTIFICATION MARKINGS.

PRIVATE PERFORATED IDENTIFICATION MARKING:

Use: PRIVATE PERFIN.

PROVINCIAL OFFICIAL:

See: OFFICIAL PERFIN.

PSEUDOPERFIN:

Any perforation found on a stamp which could be mistaken for a PERFIN.

See also : FILM PROCESSING PERFORATION.
 : PERFORATED CANCELLATION.
 : PERFORATED PRECANCEL.

PUNCH (1.).

Use: PERFIN.

PUNCH (2.).

An instrument or machine for cutting holes in paper (or other material).

In general, a punch produces a single hole (or at most three or four holes) which can be circular or any other shape. Punched holes are usually much larger than the holes used in perfins.

Compare with: PERFORATION.

See also : PUNCHED CANCELLATION.
 : PUNCHED ENDORSEMENT.

PUNCH-PERFORATED:

Use: PERFIN.

PUNCHED CANCELLATION:

The defacement of a stamp by means of punching in order to prevent its re-use.

Punched cancellations are most frequently encountered on revenue stamps due to their generally being of higher value than postage stamps. Once the stamps are removed from the document, the punched cancellation can sometimes be mistaken for a punched endorsement.

PUNCHED ENDORSEMENT:

A form of SECURITY ENDORSEMENT in which the identifying mark is produced in the stamp by punching.

Some confusion is possible with early literature on perfins since the words "punch", "punchie" and "punch perforated" were used as synonyms for perfin.

PUNCHIE:

Use: PERFIN.

PUNCTURED OFFICIAL:

Use: OFFICIAL PERFIN.

PUNST:

Use: PERFIN

RARITY FACTOR:

A system used for indicating the relative scarcity of stamps, perfins, covers, and so on.

See also: CAIN RATING.

ROULETTE:

A form of SECURITY ENDORSEMENT in which the identifying mark is produced in the stamp by rouletting.

Although the term roulette is in general use for this form of security endorsement, the strictly correct term should be rouletted endorsement to distinguish it from any other form of rouletting.

RUBBER STAMP ENDORSEMENT:

See: OVERPRINT.

SCHERMACK:

See: AFFIXER PERFIN.

SECURITY ENDORSEMENT:

A mark applied to stamps which is intended to render them identifiable and thus unsuitable for use or redemption if stolen.

Endorsements can be made on stamps by any of the following means:-

(1) Embossing	:see EMBORESSED ENDORSEMENT.
(2) Overprinting	:see OVERPRINT.
(3) Perforating	:see PERFIN.
(4) Printing	: see ADVERTISING RING.
(5) Punching	: see PUNCHED ENDORSEMENT.
(6) Rouletting	: see ROULETTE.
(7) Rubber stamping	: see OVERPRINT.
(8) Typewriting	: see OVERPRINT.
(9) Underprinting	: see UNDERPRINT
(10) Writing	: see MANUSCRIPT ENDORSEMENT.

SE-TENANT PERFINs:

Use: CARPET DIE.

SPECIMEN PERFORATIONS:

Proofs, essays or samples of actual stamps perforated with the word "specimen" (or its equivalent in other languages) in order to distinguish them from normal postage stamps.

British Guiana issued a set of stamps for postage, perforated with the word "specimen" to prevent fraud.

SPIFS:

Use: PERFIN.

The term spifs was coined by Charles Bein in the U.K. in the 1930's. It is said to be an acronym for stamps perforated for insurance against fraud or (more likely) stamps perforated with initials of firms, societies, etc.

SPLIT PERFIN:

Two incomplete PATTERNS on the opposite sides of a stamp perfinned by a MULTI-DIE PERFORATING MACHINE.

Since a multi-die perforating machine perforates two or more stamps with a single stroke, a stamp misplaced in the machine during perforating will carry part of its own perfin and part of its neighbours perfin. The two parts would make a complete pattern if placed side by side.

Compare with: PARTIAL PERFIN.

STAMP AFFIXING MACHINE:

A machine containing stamps on a coil which automatically wets the glue and sticks the stamps on the envelopes.

Some of these machines used pre-perfinned stamps but others perfinned the stamps during the affixing operation.

See also : AFFIXER PERFIN.

Synonyms: AFFIXER.

AUTOMATIC STAMPING MACHINE.

COIL STAMP AFFIXING MACHINE.

STATE OFFICIAL:

See: OFFICIAL PERFIN.

STRIPPING PLATE:

A plate through which the PINS of the PIN PLATE move and which, after the PINS have perforated the stamp, holds the stamp in place as the PINS are withdrawn.

SYNOPTIC COLLECTION:

Use: ISSUE COLLECTION.

TYPE:

See: PATTERN.

TYPE COLLECTION:

See: PATTERN COLLECTION.

TYPEWRITING ENDORSEMENT:

See: OVERPRINT.

UNDERPRINT:

A form of SECURITY ENDORSEMENT in which the identifying mark is produced on the reverse of the stamp by printing.

Although the term underprint is in general use in the U.K. for this form of security endorsement, the Americans prefer the term "back-print", reserving the word underprint to describe an overall pattern printed on sheets of paper which are then used for printing stamps. This latter form of underprinting is intended to prevent forgery.

Synonym : BACK-PRINT.

VARIETY:

See: BRANCH CODE HOLE.

Where a pattern exists with and without a branch code hole, the pattern with the branch code hole has occasionally been referred to as a variety of the basic pattern. This is incorrect usage since both are individual patterns in their own right.

APPENDIX.

UNLISTED TERMS FROM THE "PERFIN GLOSSARY".

The unlisted terms fall basically into three categories; -

- (1) Trivial terms - These are terms that can readily be defined by reference to either a standard or a philatelic dictionary. The addition of the word perfin to such a term imbues it with no special meaning.
- (2) Contrived terms - These terms generally refer to rather complex errors of perfining which would be better described than defined.
- (3) Incorrect terms - the definition refers to a different term.

BASE:

Trivial.

BENT PIN:

Trivial.

BROKEN PIN:

Trivial.

The definition also contains an error: "the resultant lack of hole is referred to as a broken pin" - actually it is a blind perforation.

DAMAGED DIE:

Trivial.

DAMAGED PERFIN:

Trivial.

The definition refers to a damaged stamp bearing a perfin.

DOUBLE PERFIN:

Trivial.

A "Perfect double perfin" which is also defined, is indistinguishable from a normal perfin and therefore cannot be detected.

FAKE PERFIN:

Trivial.

GUIDE:

This is actually a Stripping Plate.

NON-OVERLAP MINUS DOUBLE PERFIN:

Contrived.

NON-OVERLAP PLUS DOUBLE PERFIN:

Contrived.

OVERLAP DOUBLE PERFIN:

Contrived

PAIR:

Trivial

PERF-IMPERF PAIR:

A dangerous expression to use since the abbreviations "Perf" and "Imperf" have specific philatelic meanings and do not relate to perfins.

PERFIN FACTOR:

This is just the rarity factor of a perfin.

PERFIN ISSUE:

The definition actually refers to Issue Collecting.

PERFIN NUMBER:

Actually a catalogue number in a perfin catalogue.

PERFIN VARIETY:

Trivial.

RANDOM HOLE:

The definition given is that of a Double Perfin, one of which consists mainly of Blind Perforations.

VARIETY:

Trivial.

(concluded)

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